

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 13 and cancel claims 1-3 and 14-17. All pending claims are reproduced below:

1 1. – 3. (Cancelled)

1 4. (Previously presented) A computer implemented method for processing
2 electronic messages, said method comprising:
3 receiving a first message into an enterprise mail system, said first message from a
4 first human message sender;
5 storing said first message in a message database;
6 assigning a category entry from a category database to said first message, said
7 category entry containing information for handling particular incoming
8 messages;
9 delivering said first message to a first enterprise mail system user; and
10 providing a template response message to said first enterprise mail system user
11 using information in said category entry, said template response message
12 including a set of message recipients defined in said category entry.

1 5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein assigning a category
2 entry from a category database to said first message is performed by a rule processor.

1 6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein assigning a category
2 entry from a category database to said first message is performed by said first enterprise
3 and system user.

1 7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein providing a template
2 response message further comprises:
3 providing a set of default message body sections for said template response
4 message.

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein one of said set of default message
2 body sections comprises a salutation.

1 9. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein one of said set of default message
2 body sections comprises a body header.

1 10. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein one of said set of default message
2 body sections comprises a closing.

1 11. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein one of said set of default message
2 body sections comprises a footer.

1 12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein said message
2 database comprises a relational database.

1 13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4 wherein one of said set of
2 message recipients comprises said human message sender.

1 14. – 16. (Cancelled)

1 17. (Previously presented) A method for processing electronic mail messages,
2 the method comprising:
3 receiving an electronic mail message;

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4 analyzing the contents of the received electronic mail message;
5 responsive to the analysis of the contents of the message, associating the
6 electronic mail message with a message category; and
7 automatically generating a skeleton response message to at least one recipient,
8 wherein the recipients are selected responsive to associating the electronic
9 mail message with the message category.

1 18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the analysis of the
2 contents of the received electronic mail message is performed automatically.

1 19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the analysis of the
2 contents of the received electronic mail message is performed manually.

1 E2
2 20. (Previously presented) An electronic mail processing system comprising:
3 receiving means for receiving an electronic mail message;
4 analyzing means, coupled to the receiving means, for analyzing the contents of
5 the received electronic mail message;
6 associating means, coupled to the analyzing means, for associating the electronic
7 mail message with a message category responsive to the analysis of the
8 contents of the message; and
9 generating means, coupled to the analyzing means, automatically generating a
10 skeleton response message to at least one recipient, wherein the recipients are
11 selected responsive to associating the electronic mail message with the
message category.

1 21. (Previously presented) A computer program product stored on a computer
2 readable medium and containing instructions to control a computer processor to execute
3 the steps of:

4 receiving an electronic mail message;
5 analyzing the contents of the received electronic mail message;
6 responsive to the analysis of the contents of the message, associating the
7 electronic mail message with a message category; and
8 automatically generating a skeleton response message to at least one recipient,
9 wherein the recipients are selected responsive to associating the electronic
10 mail message with the message category.

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